

Romans 1:18-32
New Covenant Presbyterian Sunday School
October 2, 2022

I. The Revelation of God's Wrath (1:18)

- A. Paul begins to expound the good news he announced in 1:18
 - 1. 1:18 is the heading for the entire argument of 1:18-3:20
 - 2. God's wrath is the reason God's righteousness is needed
 - 3. In order to expound the good news, Paul starts expounding the bad news
- B. God's wrath
 - 1. Wrath is "the settled and active opposition of God's holy nature to everything that is evil."¹
 - 2. Wrath is not a loss of self control, but righteous indignation.
 - 3. God's wrath is a personal opposition to sin
 - 4. God's wrath is both future (2:5) and present tense "being revealed"

DQ: How do you think Christians and culture at large misunderstand God's wrath?

II. The Reason for God's Wrath (1:19-21)

- A. God's wrath is against those who suppress the truth
 - 1. This means to unsuccessfully seek to hinder or hold down the truth
 - 2. Paul implies that all men know this truth
- B. What truth has God revealed?
 - 1. Natural revelation
 - a) Limited in its scope
 - b) Cannot mediate salvation
 - c) Gives only enough knowledge to condemn
 - 2. Special revelation
 - a) God's direct acts of speaking and acting in Scripture
 - b) Mediates salvation
 - c) Gives saving knowledge of Christ
- C. What are the implications of natural revelation in 1:19-23?
 - 1. Apologetics
 - 2. Evangelism
 - 3. Epistemology

DQ: Is it possible to have knowledge apart from God? Can a Christian engage other viewpoints objectively without a Christian bias?

DQ: What is the crisis of authority we find in our world?

¹ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 76.

III. The Results of God's Wrath (1:22-32)

- A. God's wrath is to give them over to sin
 - 1. 1:23-24 "They exchanged...therefore God gave them over."
 - 2. 1:25-26 "They exchanged...Because of this, God gave them over."
 - 3. 1:26-28 "Their woman exchanged...God gave them over."
- B. Paul focuses on two main kinds of sin
 - 1. Idolatry (1:23,25)
 - 2. Sexual perversion (1:24,26-27)
- C. We see a connection between the root of idolatry and fruit of sexual perversion
 - 1. Jewish sources outside Scripture often make this connection
 - 2. Wisdom of Solomon 12-14 uses similar language to Romans 1

DQ: What kinds of connections do we see in society between idolatry and sexuality today?

DQ: Some contemporary commentators will say that a homosexual person is acting in accord with their nature to have same-sex relationships. How should we respond to this?

- D. God does not initiate a sin that was not already present
 - 1. People already had the sinful desires
 - 2. God gave them over to it
- E. Idolatry affects our thinking
 - 1. Verse 28 is a wordplay difficult to render in English
 - 2. "Because people did not approve God in their thinking, God has given them over to minds incapable of approving what is right."
- F. Paul reminds that all sin results from this idolatry
 - 3. 1:29-30 is a long list of social sins
 - 4. None of us are left without condemnation
 - 5. All of humanity is deserving of the wrath of God

DQ: What are some ways that the rejection of God has affected the ability of our world to think clearly. How do those who reject God show irrationality in their thinking?

Bibliography

Douglas Moo, Encountering the Book of Romans (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002, 2014.)

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Romans: The Gospel of God an Exposition of Romans 1 (Edinburgh, Scotland: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1985.)

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